



Health, Safety and Equity in Education

PRESS STATEMENT

by

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Superintendent Starr makes excuses for inaction while children suffer sleep deprivation

Today, a year after M.C.P.S. Superintendent Joshua Starr proposed delaying high school start times, he backtracked, announcing his opposition to his own proposal. We are shocked and appalled by his decision. He is choosing to ignore the overwhelming body of research documenting the benefits of later start times for teens.

In a [press statement](#) released today, justifying inaction, Dr. Starr makes several spurious arguments.

He claims that the costs are too high, citing a cost of more than \$20 million. We dispute his figures. School systems around the country have managed to make the change at minimal cost. He also argued that the costs must be balanced against other priorities. What could be a higher priority than the health of our children?

He said that feedback from the community was mixed. In fact, support from parents and physicians was overwhelmingly in favor. Both students and bus drivers were less supportive, but clearly it's the doctors and parents who understand the daily toll this is taking on their children.

Dr. Starr made the mistake of cramming together two unrelated proposals -- changing bell times and extending the elementary school day by 30 minutes. Each issue needs to be judged on its own merits. In fact, much of the overall cost--and opposition--was generated by the proposal to extend the school day.

Finally, he suggested delaying action until the results of a statewide study due by the end of this year. The purpose of the legislation mandating the study was to encourage leadership, not to provide a cover for inaction.

The bottom line is that Dr. Starr is making excuses and the children will pay the price.